Muhammad's Prophetic Evidence for Modern Man: A Philosophical, Historical, and Epistemological Analysis

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Abstract

This paper aims to examine the evidence of the prophethood of Muhammad ﷺ from the perspective of modern humans, who live in the horizon of rationalism, science, and historical consciousness. With an interdisciplinary approach between religious philosophy, prophetic epistemology, and historical data, this article shows that Muhammad's prophethood is not just a religious dogma, but an intellectual and spiritual phenomenon that can be tested through three lines of evidence: (1) the personal and moral integrity of the Prophet; (2) the authenticity and uniqueness of the Qur'anic text; and (3) the sustainability of historical influences that transcend the boundaries of space and time. In the midst of a crisis of modern human meaning, Muhammad's prophethood offers an integrative paradigm between revelation and ratio, ethics and history, spirituality and social responsibility.

Keywords: prophethood, epistemology of revelation, modern rationality, Islamic history, Muhammad.

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1. Introduction: The Crisis of Modern Human Meaning

Modern man lives in an age of tremendous progress in science and technology, but also in existential alienation. The world that was once filled with meaning is now transformed into a directionless mechanistic system. As Max Weber put it, modernity has "bewitched the world" (*Entzauberung der Welt*), expelling the sacredness from everyday life.

In such a context, the concept of prophethood seems foreign. Many modern people consider prophethood to be just a myth of the past—or simply a moral figure with no epistemological relevance. However, it is precisely in this crisis that there is a need to revisit the rational and existential functions of revelation.

Muhammad ibn 'Abdillah (570–632 AD), a historical as well as a spiritual figure, occupies a unique position in human history: an illiterate man who ignited the world's greatest intellectual and moral revolution. The relevant question for modern man is not simply "was he a prophet?", but "what evidence is his prophethood in a rational and historical framework acceptable to modern reason?"

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2. Definition and Essence of Prophethood

In the Islamic tradition, prophethood (*nubuwwah*) is the role of a chosen human being who receives revelation from God to be conveyed to mankind. Al-Ghazali in *al-Iqtisad fi al-I'tiqad* explains that prophethood is "the pinnacle of knowledge that surpasses reason, but does not violate reason." That is, revelation is not the opposite of the ratio, but the continuation of the ratio illuminated by God.

For modern man, prophetic proof no longer rests on physical miracles, but on three aspects that can be tested rationally and historically:

1. **The personality and moral integrity of the Prophet.**
2. **The authenticity and epistemic structure of the revelation it brings.**
3. **Transformative power proven by history.**

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3. Moral Proof: The Personal Integrity of the Prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم

Before receiving the revelation, Muhammad had been known to the people of Makkah by the title *of al-Amīn* — "the trusted." In a harsh and ethnically polarized society, such a moral reputation is an extraordinary phenomenon. Ibn Hishām noted that even his opponents, such as Abu Sufyan, never accused him of lying in the affairs of the world.

This evidence of integrity is recognized not only by Islamic sources, but also by non-Muslim historians. Michael H. Hart in *The 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History* (1978) placed Muhammad first because of his success in blending spirituality and political leadership without contradiction. Karen Armstrong wrote in *Muhammad: A Prophet for Our Time* (2006) that he was "a man capable of channeling divine revelation without losing his human side."

In modern epistemology, communicative honesty is the basis for the validity of propositions (Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*). Thus, Muhammad's moral honesty became the epistemic basis that his prophetic claims were not psychological illusions, but authentic transcendental communication.

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4. Textual Evidence: The Uniqueness and Authenticity of the Qur'an

One of the strongest evidences of Muhammad's prophethood is the Qur'an itself—not just because of its content, but because of its language structure, concept of revelation, and historical impact.

a. The Miracle of Language

The Qur'an is revealed in Arabic, but its rhetorical structure does not follow the pattern of verse (*shi'r*) or ordinary prose (*natsr*). The Challenge of the Qur'an,

"If you have any doubts about what We have revealed, then bring forth a surah like that" (QS al-Baqarah 2:23),
which has never been answered linguistically until now.

Orientalists such as A.J. Arberry in *The Newspaper Interpreted* admit that the rhythm and musicality of the Qur'an cannot be produced by ordinary humans. Modern stylistic analysis (Devin Stewart, *Rhymed Prose and Qur'anic Style*, 2009) also shows that the internal pattern of the Qur'an goes beyond the rules of classical Arabic rhetoric.

b. Epistemic Consistency

For 23 years revelation came down gradually, in situations of war, migration, and social pressure. Yet there is no internal contradiction in his theological doctrine. In modern cognitive theory, systemic consistency over a long period of time indicates exceptional source stability.

c. Conceptual Depth

Concepts such as *monotheism*, *niyyah* (intention), *piety*, and *fitrah* in the Qur'an have a philosophical depth that even modern theologians have only explored. For example, the concept *of fitrah* is parallel to the Kantian *idea of moral law*, but broader because it is rooted in man's ontological relationship with God.

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5. Historical Evidence: Transformation of Civilization

In less than a century after the Prophet's death, the Islamic world had stretched from Andalusia to Central Asia.
But the most significant thing is not political expansion, but the revolution of knowledge and morality brought about by revelation.

The concepts of universal education, slave freedom, contract law, and social responsibility were born from Qur'anic ethics. George Sarton, the father of the history of modern science, called this period the *golden age of human intellect*.

In the perspective of the sociology of religion, Max Weber called Islam a "religion of moral rationalization," because it combines spirituality with work ethics and social law. That is, Muhammad's prophetic influence was not only mystical, but rational in the real-world order—something that is difficult to explain without acknowledging its transcendent source.

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6. Rational Proof: The Consistency of the Philosophy of Revelation

For modern man, revelation must pass the rational test. Islam affirms the close relationship between faith and reason:

"Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of night and day, there are signs for the man of understanding." (QS Ali 'Imran 3:190)

The ratio is not removed, but redirected. Al-Farabi and Ibn Sina explain that revelation is *an active intellect* (intellectus agens) that penetrates the consciousness of the prophet. In other words, prophethood is not irrational, but superrational—transcending, not negating, reason.

In Karl Jaspers' terminology, prophethood is a "transcendent communication" that unveils a horizon of meaning that ordinary empirical consciousness cannot reach. Thus, for modern man, the prophethood of Muhammad can be accepted as the culmination of the evolution of ethical and religious consciousness.

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7. Existential Evidence: Transforming Truths

The deepest evidence of prophethood is not in argument, but in the inner transformation of the man who knows it. When a man reads the Qur'an with existential honesty, he finds himself in another—a heart touched by a higher reality.

Muhammad Iqbal in *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* wrote:

"The prophethood of Muhammad marks the end of the history of revelation because man has matured enough to accept the responsibility of freedom before God."

Thus, Muhammad's prophethood is a mirror of the spiritual maturity of mankind, not the dogmas of the past.

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8. Conclusion

The proof of Muhammad's prophethood for modern man lies not in spectacular miracles, but in three rational proofs that can be tested:

1. **Moral honesty that transcends self-interest.**
2. **Revelation that is consistent and beyond human linguistic capabilities.**
3. **The historical and intellectual impact that built civilization.**

For modern man, the prophethood of Muhammad is the answer to the disintegration between science, morality, and meaning.
He is not just a historical figure, but a paradigm that revelation and reason can unite in living truth.

"And We did not send you (Muhammad) except as a blessing to the universe." **(QS al-Anbiyā': 107)**

Brief Bibliography

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